

English-language exonyms for the EuroGeoNames project

A compilation of exonyms as used in the United Kingdom for features in the Czech Republic, Germany & Poland

Introduction

1 This paper lists the principal places and features of the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland for which there exist conventional names (*exonyms*) in the English language as used in the United Kingdom today. It raises a number of interesting issues regarding the relevance of exonyms to various methods of communication; in particular the differing requirements of different contexts: *eg* cartographic *versus* textual; current *versus* historical; and toponymic *versus* geographical.

2 Indeed, few of the exonyms in this list would feature in official United Kingdom cartography. Exonyms are not the principal cartographic name by which a feature is normally known in the United Kingdom, unless that feature is international in nature (*eg* Carpathian Mountains). For features within a single sovereignty, the name encountered in official UK cartography will usually be the relevant endonym (*eg* Praha).

3 This list is intended simply as a first example of the exonyms which might be determined for inclusion in the EuroGeoNames project. It is limited in scope. It relates to features within the three countries noted, and to features which are shared between or among them, and in both those instances it seeks to provide all the relevant names. But although the list includes features which one or more of these countries shares with other neighbours (*eg* Slovakia), it does not (yet) include the names adopted by neighbouring countries for the Carpathians (3 entries in the list below), Beskids (5 entries below) and Tatras (2 entries below), and also for the rivers Danube, Moselle, Rhine, and for Lake Constance. Nor does the list include the country names themselves.

5 Exonyms of certain categories have not been included, although the categorisation is not always easy to apply:

- purely historical exonyms: *eg* Carlsbad, Danzig, Ratisbon (yet *cf* Franconia, Mazuria, *et al*)
- purely obsolete exonyms: *eg* Little Poland, Ore Mountains
- obsolete English forms/spellings: *eg* Brunswick
- names with a thematic application in geography: *eg* Harz Foreland (yet *cf* Franconian Jura *et al*).

6 There are 62 features listed here, of which 55 are within the territory of one of the three countries, and 7 are international. A total of only 62 English language exonyms for a combined “endonym population” of 120 million in an area of some 750,000 square kilometres seems a commendably small number, especially when this total includes some exonyms which are arguably historical.

7 One interesting fact to emerge is that, for the most part, English exonyms for features in Germany relate to features internal to that country, whereas English exonyms for features in Poland relate mainly to international features which Poland shares with her neighbours. The number of English exonyms for internal and international features in the Czech Republic is about equal. Other points to emerge are as follows:

- It is not always possible to define an exonym simply by language. The exonyms for *Zatoka Gdańska* and *Lüneburger Heide* show a difference between United Kingdom and United States practice, even though the common exonym language is English.
- Occasionally the phenomenon of a *variant exonym* is encountered, as in the exonyms for *Nürnberg* and *Schwäbische Alb*.
- Sometimes one exonym does not straightforwardly relate to one feature: the exonym *Bohemian Forest*, straddling Germany and the Czech Republic, relates to one endonym in Germany (*Böhmerwald*) but to two endonyms in the Czech Republic (*Český Les* + *Šumava*).
- The English exonym *Cracow* is used more in English-language material published in Poland than it is used in the United Kingdom.

8 Ultimately, of course, the incorporation of exonyms into the EuroGeoNames project – where they will be termed *variant names* – will be determined by the particular endonyms which that project contains, and most of the difficulties regarding inclusion in and exclusion from the list below will *ipso facto* be resolved. Accordingly, there may be some exonyms in the following list which do not eventually feature because the endonym will not have been entered. This will perhaps particularly be the case where the endonym is considered historical; there may be a dozen or so such instances in this list.

9 Finally, the preparation of this list has once again illustrated the very subjective nature of the question of exonyms. It is unlikely that any two toponymic experts would draw up precisely the same list; even the same expert might compile slightly different lists on separate occasions!

The list of English language exonyms

ENDONYM(S) [*English alphabetical order*]

Bayerische Alpen [DE]
 Bayerischer Wald [DE]
 Bayern [DE]
 Beskid Śląski [PL] = Slezské Beskydy [CZ]
 Beskidy [PL]¹
 Beskidy Środkowe [PL]
 Beskidy Wschodnie [PL]
 Beskidy Zachodnie [PL]
 Bodensee [DE]

ENGLISH EXONYM

Bavarian Alps
 Bavarian Forest
 Bavaria
 Silesian Beskid Mountains
 Beskid Mountains
 Central Beskid Mountains
 East Beskid Mountains
 West Beskid Mountains
 Lake Constance

¹ Apart from the five Beskid features listed here, there are several other divisions of the Beskid Mountains for which there is no exonym in English.

Böhmerwald [DE] = Český Les + Šumava [CZ]	Bohemian Forest ²
Čechy [CZ]	Bohemia
Český Les <i>see entry under</i> Böhmerwald	
Dolny Śląsk [PL] ³	Lower Silesia
Donau [DE]	Danube
Franken [DE]	Franconia
Fränkische Alb [DE]	Franconian Jura
Gdańska, Zatoka [PL]	Gulf of Gdańsk ⁴
Górny Śląsk [PL] ⁵	Upper Silesia
Hannover [DE]	Hanover ⁶
Helgoland [DE]	Heligoland
Helgoländer Bucht [DE]	Heligoland Bay
Helska, Mierzeja [PL]	Hel Peninsula
Hessen [DE]	Hesse
Karpaty [PL]	Carpathian Mountains
Karpaty Wschodnie [PL]	Eastern Carpathian Mountains
Karpaty Zachodnie [PL]	Western Carpathian Mountains
Kaszuby [PL]	Kashubia
Köln [DE]	Cologne
Kraków [PL]	Cracow ⁷
Labe [CZ] = Elbe [DE]	Elbe (<i>English exonym=DE endonym</i>)
Lüneburger Heide [DE]	Lüneburg Heath ⁸
Lužická Nisa [CZ] = Neisse [DE] = Nysa Łużycka [PL]	Neisse (<i>English exonym=DE endonym</i>)
Mazowsze [PL]	Mazovia
Mazury [PL]	Mazuria
Morava [CZ]	Moravia
Mosel [DE]	Moselle
München [DE]	Munich
Neisse <i>see entry under</i> Lužická Nisa	
Niederlausitz [DE]	Lower Lusatia
Niedersachsen [DE]	Lower Saxony
Nordfriesische Inseln [DE]	North Frisian Islands
Nord-Ostsee-Kanal [DE]	Kiel Canal
Nordrhein-Westfalen [DE]	North Rhine–Westphalia
Nürnberg [DE]	Nuremberg ⁹
Nysa Łużycka <i>see entry under</i> Lužická Nisa	
Oder [DE] = Odra [PL]	Oder (<i>English exonym=DE endonym</i>)
Odra <i>see entry under</i> Oder	

² The Czech endonyms differ in the northern half (*Český Les*) and the southern half (*Šumava*) of this feature.

³ The name *Nizina Śląska* [PL] relates to a physiogeographical feature smaller than the English *Lower Silesia*.

⁴ This is the exonym in UK English; in US English it is *Gulf of Gdansk*.

⁵ The name *Wyżyna Śląska* [PL] relates to a physiogeographical feature smaller than the English *Upper Silesia*.

⁶ *Hanover* persists in English because of its association with the Hanoverian Dynasty.

⁷ *Cracow* is obsolescent.

⁸ This is the exonym in UK English; in US English it is *Luneburg Heath*.

⁹ Unusually, this feature has a variant spelling for the English exonym: *Nuremburg*.

Ostfriesische Inseln [DE]	East Frisian Islands
Pommersche Bucht [DE] ¹⁰ = Pomorska, Zatoka [PL]	Pomeranian Bay
Pomorska, Zatoka <i>see entry under</i> Pommersche Bucht	
Pomorze Zachodnie [PL]	Pomerania ¹¹
Praha [CZ]	Prague
Rhein [DE]	Rhine
Rheinland [DE]	Rhineland
Sachsen [DE]	Saxony
Sachsen-Anhalt [DE]	Saxony-Anhalt ¹²
Schwaben [DE]	Swabia
Schwäbische Alb [DE]	Swabian Jura ¹³
Schwarzwald [DE]	Black Forest
Śląsk [PL] = Slezsko [CZ]	Silesia
Slezské Beskydy <i>see entry under</i> Beskid Śląski	
Slezsko <i>see entry under</i> Śląsk	
Šumava <i>see entry under</i> Böhmerwald	
Tatry [PL]	Tatra Mountains
Tatry Wysokie [PL]	High Tatra Mountains
Thüringen [DE]	Thuringia
Thüringer Wald [DE]	Thuringian Forest
Warszawa [PL]	Warsaw
Westfalen [DE]	Westphalia
Wisła [PL]	Vistula

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¹⁰ *Oderbucht* is sometimes seen as the DE endonym.

¹¹ Of the available Polish endonyms, the English form *Pomerania* relates better to the historical region *Pomorze Zachodnie* rather than the historical region *Pomorze Gdańskie*.

¹² This English form is sometimes seen, though more often the English language uses the endonym *Sachsen-Anhalt*.

¹³ Sometimes seen in English as *Swabian Alps*.